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# ❖ The Holy Cow ❖

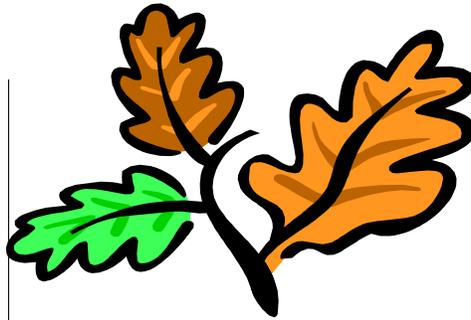
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November 2003

## October 25 Chapter Meeting Recap

The Halsey Hall Chapter of SABR met on Saturday, October 25th, at the Community United Methodist Church in Columbia Heights for their annual fall chapter meeting. About 27 members and guests attended (Who didn't sign the sign-up sheet?) gathered at 9 a.m. for three morning presentations. Leading off was **Kyle McNary**, a St. Louis Park resident, not known by too many people in the chapter previously. Kyle self-published a book on Negro Leagues star Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe entitled *Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe: 36 Years of Pitching and Catching in Baseball's Negro Leagues* in 1994. Kyle described how he learned of the integrated Bismarck team of 1935 growing up in North Dakota and how his research in this team lead him to one of baseball's all-time characters, Radcliffe. Radcliffe, you see, played on 40 teams in his 36 year playing career, so it was a good chance he played on Bismarck in 1935. He did and McNary met Radcliffe in the early 1980s, and not too immodestly said, "Why don't you do a book on me?" Some of the more interesting points of McNary's comments centered on Radcliffe's 90 year friendship with fellow Negro Leaguer Lester Lockett. They both grew up in Mobile and Radcliffe is currently 101 years old and Lockett pushing 100. Radcliffe's Minnesota connection includes one and one-half months for Rochester in the Southern Minny League in 1948 and some unfortunate hostile treatment in Albert Lea. McNary attempted to show a PBS documentary video from the Living Century Series on Radcliffe, but unfortunate technical problems preventing the showing. McNary also has a web-site, **[pitchblackbaseball](#)**.



*Another World Series is over and the season finished. Thanksgiving and the holidays are rounding the corner and heading for your home.....*

**com** that features a new biography on a Negro League star every month.

The second speaker was **Charles "Chuck" Blomquist**, who talked about his trip to Alaska last summer and going to games in the Alaska Baseball League. Chuck and his wife, Joyce, showed slides of Alaska, the ballparks visited, and of some of the people they met while he talked of the Alaska Baseball League, a wood-bat summer college league that has sent 430 players to the major leagues. The season runs from June 9th to August 1st with the league winner competing in the National Baseball Congress Tournament in Wichita in August. Six teams competed in the ABL in 2003, including the Matsu Miners (Palmer), Peninsula Oilers (Kenai), Fairbanks Gold Miners, two teams from Anchorage, and an Athletes in Action team. Highlights of the season include the Mid-Night Sun Game, which starts at 10:30 p.m. and is stopped at midnight for presentations, etc. No lights are used at the ballparks but it still must be difficult for the outfielders to see the ball hit off the bat. Another interesting point in Chuck's presentation was that ther ri

the river valley near Palmer was settled in the 1930s by folks from Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin and how the good baseball fans of Alaska support their local team and how some families provide lodging and meals for the players year after year. Some big leaguers that have played in the ABL are Tom Seaver, Mark McGwire, Dave Winfield, and Randy Johnson. Chuck mentioned that Lou Freeman's book entitled *Diamonds in the Rough: The Alaska Summer League*, is a good source of information on the league.

The third and final presentation of the morning was a slide presentation on Twin Cities ballparks by Augsburg professors **Kristin Anderson and Chris Kimball**. They have looked at parks in Minneapolis since the 1890s (mainly the Butler Square park and Nicollet Park) and in St. Paul (mainly the downtown Pill Box and Lexington Park) from an architecture perspective and how different histories of the two cities resulted in two widely different ballparks. While Anderson and Kimball talked (they took turns), they showed some slides of the various ballparks, including some I had never seen before. They mentioned that Minneapolis architects only worked in Minneapolis and St. Paul architects only worked in St. Paul. So it was hardly surprising that the design Minneapolis architect Harry Wild Jones had for the renovated Nicollet Park differed widely from that of St. Paul architects Buechner and Orth had for renovated Lexington Park. One interesting feature of the Lexington Park renovation (in time for the 1916 season) was the shift of home plate from the southwest corner to the northwest corner. For further information on this topic see Anderson and Kimball's article in the Fall 2003 issue of *Minnesota History*.

## Civil War Novel Next Selection for Book Club

The members of the Halsey Hall Chapter Book Club (maybe we should find a name...the book club at work uses the name gorilla gophers) decided at their October 11th meeting to read a novel by Thomas Dyja entitled *Play for a Kindgom*. This 416 page book was published by Harcourt Brace in 1997. I found a copy at Barnes and Noble and most good libraries should also have copies. It has gotten good reviews among some of my SABR and vintage baseball brethren and I am anxious to read it to its conclusion. As John C. Waugh of the Washington Post Book World states in the book's forepages, "Thomas Dyja knows how to mix his ingredients. In this innovative and original first novel he blends two staples of American psyche—the Civil War and baseball—into a recipe for a very readable book. The battle scenes ring true....and the baseball scenes ring true as well. Dyja's book is admirably

wrought."

The book club will meet on Saturday, December 6th at 10:00 a.m. at the coffee shop at the Hopkins depot. Check the coffee shop's web-site for directions and further information at <http://www.thedepotcoffeehouse.com>. Contact moderator Tom Swift at [swifttom@hotmail.com](mailto:swifttom@hotmail.com) for questions and comments.

### Coming up in the near future:

December 6th.....Chapter board meeting and book club meeting.

January.....chapter breakfast (Jan. 3rd?)

hot stove meeting: time and place TBA

Twins Fest: Jan. 23-25; contact Rich

## Chapter Authors

**Tom Tuttle** has a new book out on the Minnesota Vikings that is available in local bookstores. He previously has written a book about baseball and one on the first season of the Minnesota Wild hockey team.

**Roger Godin** has written a book entitled, *The Brooklyn Football Dodgers The Other "Bums"*. The book is a 432 page paperback that costs \$ 29.95. One can order the book through Amazon.com, Borders Bookstores or directly from St. Johann Press (201-387-1529).

**Stew Thornley** will have an yet unnamed book on the gravesites of famous Minnesotans released shortly by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. Stew is currently working on a somewhat comprehensive book on Minnesota baseball history that also will be published by MHS Press.

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## The Holy Cow

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*"We used to play four in one day just about every Fourth of July. I'd pitch two and catch two. The way I made it was to sleep the 35 minutes between each game." ....Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe*

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